

Linda Clair
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File 7d – Friday afternoon discussion session

Question: You said you can never be too grounded, so I wanted to check in with you about groundedness. Sometimes if I'm sitting or if I remember any other time, I check in with myself about groundedness. For me, first of all, am I breathing from my belly? I'm not consciously counting the breath but I'm feeling them. After that, it's a bit of trust. Do you have another way of describing that 'you cannot be too grounded'?

Linda: I say that because whatever stage you're at in this, if you're open to it, more and more energy is going to be to be coming into your body, and your body needs to contain that energy for it to work inside your body. The tendency is, when you do start to get more energy in your body, to get a bit excited about it, a bit shaky, and you feel like you want to move around and release it, which is what we're taught to do, I suppose. That's the habitual way of dealing with it, to release energy all the time, whereas this is containing energy.

And the energy coming in never finishes, it never ends. So it's impossible to be too much in your body and aware of your body and feeling your body. By grounded I mean really aware of your body, in your body, not flitting around feeling spacey, which it's easy to do, when there's too much. Some people might call it Shakti. 😊

So you've got to be aware, and particularly after realisation too you need to be extra aware of it, because a lot more comes in and it can be really bumpy for a while. So it's very important to stay grounded and to still sit at times, even though you feel, "Oh, I don't need to sit anymore, not like I used to." You still do need to for a different reason – well, it's sort of a similar reason but it's different. You still need to stay grounded unless you want to stagnate or release the energy in some other way. So I feel it's really important to keep grounding that energy that comes in.

Question: I think I was trying to overcomplicate it. That sounds much simpler.

Linda: Yes, it's simply dealing with the energy that's coming in, and grounding it.

Question: Following on from what A. said, by the energy that's coming in, do you mean the energy that we're picking up from you while we're sitting here?

Linda: That's part of it. I was more feeling universal energy, life energy that starts to come into your body.

Question: As we become more open?

Linda: Yes. What anyone in this state does – and it's one of the reasons it's really good to have a teacher – is I'm grounding you. I'm opening you up but also grounding the energy. It's why a lot of

people say that even after enlightenment you should stay around your teacher for a while because you don't realise how much you're being grounded by a teacher. I didn't realise how much I was until I wasn't around a teacher, and suddenly you're at sea and a lot is happening and you realise how much you depended on that teacher to ground you. So it's not my energy – it's life energy. You will feel it more around someone who is in the realised state. Other things will be happening too but the grounding is probably even more important.

Question: Sometimes I've noticed, like when I have a Skype with you, in the time before it's going to happen I'll start getting prepared. I usually sit for a while and I feel as though I can feel your energy. Is it that I'm open to the possibility of it?

Linda: Yes, maybe.

Question: About the grounding, when going home, I start spilling: singing, talking, getting over-excited – it's good to see everyone at home and enjoy. But then I find I start feeling frayed around the edges and sensory overload. And I often have trouble sleeping the first two to three nights. Should I be trying to contain that a bit more and avoid some of that frayed feeling?

Linda: I'd say, don't do too much. Try and take it a bit easy the first few days without being too tight about it. Just be aware of it. Keep up your practice but don't do too much, have a bit of a break. Still do a bit of sitting even though it's the last thing you feel like doing. Doing short periods can really help to ease you back into the world and worldly stuff. And just be aware, watch what you're doing. You'll know if you become a bit too excited or frazzled. It's quite normal not to sleep all that well the first couple of days. I'd say, just pace yourself. Don't do too much too soon.

Question: I'm curious how experiencing something like this manifests and what to look out for and what transpires over the next few weeks and what you might notice?

Linda: Well, it's different for different people at different times. Sometimes after a retreat you can feel a bit emotional for a while. But that usually settles down and it's just because a lot of stuff has been stirred up. You can feel quite energised and high and great. So like I was saying to V., don't overdo it. Be aware of that because there can be a tendency to get over excited.

You've got a sitting practice anyway don't you at home? (Yes.) So give yourself two or three days' rest and then start it again. Or if you wanted to keep sitting when you get back just sit for short periods the first few days, and then get back into it. That will just stabilise you so you don't go too far either way going, "Oh wow, this is amazing! I just want to keep doing it," or, "I just want to party now and enjoy myself." If you can stay reasonably level without regulating anything too much, it can help you to assimilate what's happened.

You'll see and feel the effects of this in your daily life in the coming weeks, months, and years maybe. In fact, it gets to the point where you're just always seeing something changing. Often it can be the absence of something. So rather than feeling something more, there can be something that's just gone that you don't notice straight away, you might notice a bit later. In some sort of situation, you suddenly notice you're reacting to it differently, less, in a very different way. So it can appear to be subtle but really it's very deep-seated changes that happen.

Question: The two most serious things I did to my back happened after the retreat this time last year, and then after the March retreat. Both times I felt as though there had been some quite deep shift but didn't have any idea what it was. Within days I'd done some pretty uncomfortable things to my body. It seemed to me that it had been related to the retreats.

Linda: I'd be very sceptical about that. I can't see how it would be related to doing the retreat.

Question: I wondered if it was from a shift in energy?

Linda: No.

Question: I just wanted to say something to U. from this morning. When I first came to Linda I felt very much on the outside. It happens often when you go to a new place. It's almost natural isn't it?

Linda: Well, it's not, because I don't feel that now. It's one thing this does. You can walk into a room of people you don't know – it's not like you instantly feel an affinity with them but – there's not that anxiety and self-consciousness.

Question: Yes, I'm much better now. I think I could just about go anywhere and even if I felt a bit funny I'd just think to myself, "Well, that's new but I'll be alright in a little while." So if he keeps coming to you and consciously does his sitting, it will all go away. (Laughter.) I could relate. I knew then that it was related to my school days because I wanted to be popular and I wasn't. But it does if you keep watching and working on yourself.

Linda: Yes it does – that desire to be popular, accepted, loved – it's like, "Take it or leave it." 😊
(Laughing.)

Question: This is kind of a thinking question. When you talk about how you ground us, which I experience you doing, not just grounding energy but also grounding emotion at times, like when I've been very emotional and then I've had a connection with you – it's like you take it away or something. What's it like for you when you're sitting with us and we're going through all this stuff? How does that impact you?

Linda: Less and less specifically. It must impact me a little bit but most of it just goes through – maybe a little bit does but I'm not conscious of that. The clearer I become, the more transparent it is and the more it just goes through and the less specific it is for me. So when people talk about their suffering it doesn't trigger anything in me, or feelings of empathy, usually. That sounds cold but it's really the best way – not to feed your emotions by being emotional back and empathising and going, "You poor thing." I know people have done that to me before and it actually makes me more emotional, and makes me feel sorry for myself and justify it.

So, how it impacts me now – I feel now not as tired during retreats. This is the third retreat I've done in a month and I feel a little bit tired but quite fresh. I know in the last retreat we had a lot of people were going through stuff. I'm not conscious of it affecting me all that much but it must do it a bit. Usually by the end I'm pretty exhausted, and for a couple of days I'm really tired but then I recover. And the time in between retreats are really recovery times and then I do something else. People wonder what I do in between – it's really just recharging, recovering and getting fresh again, and other stuff of course too. But during the retreat, it doesn't usually trigger stuff.

Question: Another part of that question is that you said it was only after your enlightenment that you realised how much your teachers had done for you and what you were saying about grounding.

Linda: It just becomes the natural thing to do. So it's like a natural response rather than, "I'm working to ground you." It used to be that much more. And I would feel individual people but now it's more a mass thing. The first couple of days for me are usually the hardest because everyone is pretty scattered and they're not together as a group yet. So it's working energetically to keep everyone here (Linda laughs) and settled into it. And then it changes. So the first couple of days I feel much more tired usually, and then get into it differently – go into overdrive.

Question: Talking about being grounded, I noticed when I sat right in front of you was the day I felt more grounded than ever, the whole afternoon and the next morning. Then when I felt back and back I didn't feel as grounded. Also, I had an experience where I hover up here (with the head) whereas some people have their chin down here. I catch myself with my head up because I want to get away from the pain. I hope that pain won't come up. I had a sit where I had a lot of pain in my back, then there was fear in the pain. Is that what it is, pain and fear together?

Linda: The fear makes the pain more intense. A big part of the intensity of the pain might be fear. The fear doesn't always create the pain. You have a weakness in your back and it's going to accentuate any sort of weakness in your body. But the fear will intensify it. The suffering is from the fear. But the pain – we're all going to feel some bits of pain in your bodies at some time.

Question: What do you mean by the suffering?

Linda: Well, pain and suffering are different. Suffering is a reaction to pain. You can feel pain and not suffer. That's what part of this is all about, seeing the reaction to pain more than the pain itself. The less reaction there is, usually the less intense the pain. A lot of people think suffering and pain go together but they don't necessarily go together.

Question: I had an experience when I had a lot of pain in the back and I was just being with the pain and eventually everything just turns into space. And the space is all around me so I don't know where my legs are. I can still feel the intense pain but it doesn't feel part of my body. It's just there and there's all this space around me. That's happened quite a few times. But the rest of the time it's been constant pain, like a rock the whole week, and fear of going towards it. But it's been a really lovely retreat because it's the first time I haven't forced myself to do stuff. K. said something about surrender and I tried to surrender to a lot more this time than I have before. I always feel like I'm tense because I'm scared that something's going to happen. Or scared that something will come up, so I try to keep it all still. But today I was hearing you say that 'now' constantly moves, and there I am trying to keep everything still, but it has to move as well.

Linda: It does. And that's what the energy is too. The stillness is incredibly fast-moving energy, or vibrating, but not moving in a linear direction timewise towards anything. It's just vibrating so quickly that it becomes still. Often, the pain that you feel during a retreat, during a sitting, is where that energy is starting to move really quickly but it's still encountering blocks in the body. Then you feel that as pain because the energy is blocked – it can't keep going – it can't move freely.

Question: On that subject, I've been having the last few days of really going into the pain, sitting very still with it, but feeling a bit confused when you were talking about it then that I might be doing the wrong thing.

Linda: No, you're sitting still there. I'm not talking about your body sitting still, it's not that sort of stillness. It's more the stillness of now, where there's space there's not that movement into time. With the pain, when you're sitting, it is good to keep your body still. Then you can see much more clearly if there's just a slight movement. There's so much momentum in our bodies that as soon as we move we're creating more momentum. Eventually that doesn't happen, it doesn't matter how fast you move, there's not this momentum there. But leading up to that it's why we sit still, so that we feel that pain, we don't avoid it by moving away from it.

Question: I've been moving toward it or just really letting it be there and not reacting or resisting it.

Linda: That's perfect.

Question: That's been huge. Something has really changed for me around my relationship to it or sense of not having the same level of resistance to it. I'm very embodied with it, in the body. My sit bones are like in the centre of everything.

Linda: So you're getting a lot of pain there?

Question: A bit. It comes by the end of a long sit. It feels sort of good.

Linda: It's grounding pain.

Question: Today I experimented and wanted to ask if you would recommend this. (Laughing) I've been enjoying the food and experimenting with my diet, no carbs, sugar, and it made my brain chemistry really stable and I wasn't feeling sleepy after meals. So I've been having a lot of food, and lunch especially, and I've been trembling and becoming very sensitive to the chemical reactions that happen in the body. When I had my big lunch I could feel the chemical reaction in my body and shaking from the nice cake and sugar and coffee, so my heart beat has gone up. I'm going, "This is great but I don't know what to do with it." At work after lunch I sometimes have a sit in the lounge. So I went to the yoga room here after lunch and sat there on my zafu with a half-an-hour timer and it was a very effortless sit because my whole body had come alive and buzzing. Do you recommend me doing this after every meal?

Linda: That was because you had coffee and all that stuff?

Question: No, but it still affects me. I remember when I was really sick during a Kew retreat and I was having codeine. I could feel it dissolving in my bloodstream. I've become very sensitive to things dissolving in my bloodstream.

Linda: What are you saying? Should you meditate directly after lunch? Well, I don't usually do that. I prefer to go for a walk. So I don't know. I usually prefer not to sit right after lunch. I prefer to go for a walk or something like that. It's up to you.

Question: Because we are all watching pain and all the vibrations, if pain is like a seed and eventually it evens out in the whole body and becomes a tree, if you work with it and it dissolves or it shifts and it becomes the whole buzzing thing. It's like an opportunity because I've become very sensitive to the vibrations. I can almost turn on a dial and feel the body as one vibration.

Linda: Is this all the time?

Question: Most of the time I can catch the whole thing, the whole body.

Linda: So you're still coming back to your breath?

Question: The breath is like a very soft anchor for me.

Linda: I don't know. If you want to do that, do that. If you're at work and you can sit after lunch and you feel okay doing that, do it. I don't know.

Question: I'll experiment and see how it goes.

Linda: Things will change. This is something that's not strictly related to the physical. It's good to have your body reasonably healthy to do this but really, you can do it whether you're pretty healthy or not. I wouldn't get too obsessed with the chemical reactions that are happening in the body. I'd look more at your emotional reactions to things. It's good that you're getting into your diet and all that stuff, but ultimately it's going to affect this to a degree but not that much, so don't get too obsessed with the physical. I suppose that's what I'm saying.